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ABSTRACT

The appallingly inadequate knowledge of current and international affairs among U.S. college students is well documented. ICONS, the International Communication and Negotiation Simulations program, offers an encouraging initiative for addressing the problem. ICONS is a "model United Nations" that the staff of the University of Maryland at College Park administers. Students from participating schools play the roles of decision makers of assigned countries as they negotiate a host of international issues. The schools generally get students involved through a course such as comparative foreign policy, a single-nation policy course, or international politics. Phase one, lasting 6 weeks, begins with the instructor offering students a pre-simulation questionnaire. Students then work to develop bibliographic and other library skills. At some schools, political science and foreign language students may work together, which makes the simulation more realistic. The first phase also includes a case study of one nation's foreign policy and an analysis of a detailed international scenario. The next step is the preparation of a class position paper on the scenario. In phase two the students communicate with peers around the country and world via regular mail and real time on-line conferencing through POLNET II. Phase three encompasses a debriefing of the students to determine what they have learned, a post-simulation questionnaire and course evaluation, testing, and grading. The exercise requires hard work and commitment on the part of instructor and students alike, but it also can be fun for all participants. (SG)

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ED 364 473

A PRACTICAL GUIDE TO USING ICONS
(INTERNATIONAL COMMUNICATION AND NEGOTIATION SIMULATIONS)

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Introduction

American college students' knowledge of current and international affairs is often appallingly inadequate - even where one might not expect this to be the case. A poll conducted in late 1992 of 3,119 Ivy League undergraduates revealed that half could not name their home-state Senators and more than a third could not identify the Prime Minister of Great Britain. Indeed, eleven percent did not know the author of the United States Declaration of Independence (*New York Times*, April 18, 1993; Toch 1993)!

Given these bleak statistics (which may not surprise many professors), it is obvious that the political science profession needs to devote more time and attention to the business of teaching and exciting our students about domestic and international politics. Our students must realize that it is in their best self-interest to learn more about our increasingly interdependent world. This will not be an easy task. Political scientists will need to cooperate with their colleagues from other academic disciplines and use every tool at their disposal. In particular, the vast potential of modern technology for better pedagogy will be a strong ally in the war against inexcusable ignorance.

This paper will concentrate on one encouraging initiative called Project ICONS (International Communication and Negotiation Simulations). In another writing, I have discussed the virtues of this program and why I believe it is a large step in the right direction (Vavrina 1992). This essay's purpose is to serve as a sensible guide to those desiring to integrate ICONS into their curriculum. It will detail many practical matters of implementing the program in the classroom. The author fully appreciates that there is no one "right" way to do ICONS. Professors utilizing it need to be flexible to adapt the project to their individual teaching needs. Hopefully, some of the following thoughts will make their toil a bit easier.

ICONS in Brief

ICONS is a state of the art "Model United Nations" administered by staff at the University of Maryland at College Park, where it was developed a dozen years ago.[1] Participating schools are expected to role-play the decision-makers of assigned countries as they negotiate a whole host of international issues with their peers who literally span the U.S.A. and the globe. This is all made possible because of the wonders of modern computers, telecommunications, and simulation management software known as POLNET II. Real-time conferencing of country-team delegations is conducted in English; however, institutions may elect to participate in a language option which allows for daily messages to be sent/received in a number of major languages for eventual translation (Crookall and Landis 1992).

Before You Start

It is essential to have the backing of your institution to make ICONS a successful experience. Specifically, it is vital to garner the support of your departmental chair, academic dean, librarian, director of academic computing, and the official in charge of the computing center.[2] There is a substantial charge which, although worth it, will have to come from someone's budget.[3] Furthermore, novices to the program probably will encounter the additional expense of going to the University of Maryland for the optional two-day ICONS Workshop. Some additional financial resources for library acquisitions are highly desirable. Other expenses (e.g. occasional long distance phone calls, supplies) are modest. Photocopying can add to costs. Of course, ICONS requires some minimal hardware/software configuration (i.e. PC, printer, modem and phone line).

The foreign policy aspects of an ICONS university simulation can take several guises and include: a comparative foreign policy course, a single-nation policy course, and an international politics course (Wilkenfeld and Brecht 1988, 5-2). Professors availing themselves of the third choice, and perhaps the other two options as well, should be aware they will almost certainly feel they do not have enough time to do all they want to do in the semester. ICONS most assuredly can be used effectively to teach international politics. However, the professor will have to modify his/her traditional IP syllabus because a substantial, though not insurmountable, amount of time will be devoted to country-specific study, preparation of a position paper, and teaching students how to use the relevant computer hardware and software.

My personal preference is to offer a separate upper-level course primarily for political science majors on International Communication and Negotiation as a follow-up to standard courses in International Politics and/or International Law and Organization. The ICONS course then becomes an applied version of its more theoretical prerequisite(s). Nevertheless, provision should be made to allow some students from other disciplines to join. For example, any ICONS course would be enriched by the presence of students with a background in international business, foreign language, economics, history, world religions, etc.

For a school portraying one delegation, the ideal class size ranges between fifteen to twenty participants.[4] Novices should be cautioned against biting off more than they can chew. Ideally, newcomers should play *one* small country. Assuming the position of a major player and then canceling out, is devastating.[5] Ethics demand that institutions involved in ICONS perform conscientiously not only for themselves, but for the sake of others as well.

Careful thought should be given to the scheduling of the class

employing ICONS. It is my opinion that classes which meet only once a week are not ideal and should be avoided if possible. ICONS requires a great deal of monitoring students by the professor. Although much of this can be done electronically, there is no substitute for face-to-face contacts. A professor who detects a student problem will appreciate not having to wait an entire week before being able to confront it in person. This is especially true because, as we shall see, the group dynamics involved in ICONS are especially complicated.

Those schools opting for the foreign language option should also consider the possibility of scheduling the political science and foreign language classes simultaneously to foster interaction between the two. In addition, institutions should not sign up for foreign language, find the task too difficult, and drop out in the middle of negotiations.

Before the semester commences, it is very beneficial to establish a link with both the library's acquisition's director to augment holdings if necessary, and a reference librarian to help with bibliographic instruction (BI) and assist students with research.

Courses employing ICONS should be accurately advertised and explained to prospective enrollees well in advance. ICONS is very different from most collegiate learning experiences. As such, it will not appeal to all. It is far better to be candid about the work realities of ICONS beforehand, than to startle students during the first few weeks of the term. The latter will almost assuredly lead to a drop in class morale which is particularly devastating for the participation-intensive ICONS venture. ICONS is **not** a spectator sport.

A course using ICONS naturally breaks down into three phases. Each phase presents special challenges for implementation.

Phase One

The first phase of ICONS in a typical semester lasts about six weeks. It is necessary from the onset to make sure once again that everyone clearly understands the unique nature of ICONS. My experience is that few, if any, properly informed students choose to transfer to another course during the add/drop period.

Pre-simulation Questionnaire

During one of the initial class periods, a pre-simulation questionnaire should be distributed to the class.[6] The ICONS team has given a great deal of thought to outcomes assessment. Permission has been given for those associated with Project ICONS to use a fourteen-page questionnaire that has been developed by

Judith Torney-Purta, Professor of Human Development at the University of Maryland. The survey contains inter alia Likert attitude items in a five point agree-disagree format as well as open-ended questions. It requires a reasonable amount of time to complete with care. To encourage students to make the required effort, I recommend reserving perhaps twenty-five to thirty-five minutes of class time for this purpose. This arrangement, as opposed to sending the questionnaires home for completion, signals to the class that this is serious business. Students need to be encouraged to answer the questions honestly. They should be reminded verbally that the information obtained is anonymous (an identifying number is used for the sole purpose of comparing responses to those of post-simulation questionnaires for aggregate studies) and has no effect on their grade. Students should also be told that their efforts in completing the instruments are crucial to improving the program in years hence.

Library Skills

Another early class should be devoted to bibliographic instruction. This can be done best by holding one class in the library building. I have been very fortunate in that the staff at my institution has been particularly helpful in this regard. BI is significant in any case; it is especially important in an age of ever-expanding electronic data bases. Students need to be informed, or reinformed, about electronic catalogues and shown how to access and print abstracts (or sometimes even full texts) of newspaper, magazine, and journal articles through CD-ROM technology such as the *PROQUEST* system. On-line data bases, such as *Grolier's Encyclopedia* and the *CIA World Fact Book* are also useful.

The main difficulty in integrating BI into a course lies in the fact that many students believe they know all there is to know about a library when in reality their knowledge is seriously deficient. It is imperative, therefore, to motivate them for the BI class. A good way to do this is to make sure beforehand each student knows exactly what his/her responsibility is with respect to research for the class position paper (to be discussed later). This, in turn, requires a great deal of organization during the early days of Phase One.

One of the drawbacks of modern technology is that students easily get seduced by it and tend to eschew traditional resources. For example, students who are mesmerized with *PROQUEST* often dread foraging through the *Social Sciences Index*, *PAIS* or *ABC Pol Sci*. Of course, the latter contain much valuable (especially older) material not captured by the former. In my experience students avoid using microfilm and microfiche despite their great value. In addition, they usually require a great deal of assistance with the world of government documents. The good reference librarian, in partnership with the instructor, can do wonders remedying these deficiencies. One of the best consequences of employing ICONS in

the classroom is that it provides an ideal opportunity for the student to learn that the reference librarian can be the researcher's best friend. Since students will no doubt forget many of the details of a thorough BI session, the most important thing that can be achieved is the encouragement of close ties with a "user-friendly" librarian. Shy students must overcome any reluctance to ask for guidance.

Schools are notified well in advance as to what country they will role-play in the next simulation. It is a wise idea to survey your library's holdings on your assigned country as soon as possible so as to order relevant materials if required. Several country-specific and generic works should be placed on reserve. Regional compendia from Stryker-Post Publication's *The World Today Series* (Dostert 1993) are advantageous to acquire. Published every August, they contain valuable updated information.

Coordination with Translators

If your school is taking advantage of the foreign language option, it is best at an early stage to introduce the language students to the political science students. As noted above, careful scheduling of both classes may facilitate this task. I strongly advocate partaking of the foreign language option. It makes the simulation more realistic and provides for the opportunity for the foreign language student and political scientist to learn from each other. Furthermore, incorporating foreign language into the simulation is cost effective because the fees remain the same when the language students participate. From my discussions with several foreign language faculty at Marist, as well as from my own observations, I am convinced that the opportunities afforded to foreign language majors by the ICONS program are absolutely first-rate. More language programs should take part.[7]

It should be understood that institutions lacking the necessary foreign language support can still take part in the language option electronically through the use of translators at the other colleges and universities.

Experience has taught me not to underestimate the difficulties involved in getting the language and political science students to interact positively. There appears to be a strong tendency for one group to remain in isolation from the other. Part of the problem stems from a feeling on the part of the language students that they are not allowed to give much, or any, input into the key decisions during the on-line conferences, which all invariably see as the centerpiece of ICONS. It is one thing to tell foreign language students that they need to become sensitive to the substantive concerns of their political peers and to advise the latter of the importance of nuances in language. It is quite another thing to obtain the desired synergistic relationship. Political scientists

must learn to defer to language specialists when it comes to "getting the feel" for messages sent across cultures. Peoples from various traditions, for example, say "no" in divergent ways.[8]

I am continuing to explore this whole area with my foreign language faculty associates. Ms. Patty Landis, ICONS Simulation Director, advocates inviting the foreign language students to germane foreign policy lectures and assigning a translator to each sub-group of the foreign policy class. This is sound advice; however, it necessitates a lot of coordination with the foreign language instructor.[9]

Country Study

Phase One entails concentration on one country's foreign policy as a case study. Hence, sufficient class time should be devoted to an overview of the history, politics, geography, economics, etc. of your designated country. It helps to have some mandatory reading monitored by a quiz. Guest speakers and films are particularly apropos at this stage. Taking advantage of resources found in your institution or local community can be very rewarding. During my initial exposure to ICONS, Marist was chosen to play the delegation from Belgium. As luck would have it, our Vice President for Academic Affairs happened to be Flemish! He delivered a very interesting lecture on Belgian society that would have been difficult for me to duplicate. Next fall Marist is destined to assume the part of the Peruvian delegation. I plan to ask to speak to my class one of my former colleagues in Religious Studies who has lived for years with the Aymara. If he can not come in person, I will use a videotape of one of his prior lectures. I remain convinced that many similar resources are available to the typical professor who is simply willing to explore.

Learning from the "Scenario"

In the beginning of the semester, the staff from ICONS will mail to each country-team a detailed "scenario". This lengthy (circa 25 page) white paper projects the real world into the future by approximately six months.[10] It outlines the international system and describes basic global or regional issues to be negotiated. Scenarios are very well-written documents that students should study thoroughly. In fact, if students successfully understand just this single document, they will have gone a long way in increasing their knowledge of international relations. As is the case for country-specific readings, a test on the scenario is suitable to signal to students the importance of this paper. A typical scenario might treat: North/South problems, international trade, global ecology, human rights, economic integration, arms control and disarmament, drug trafficking and world health. It is a mistake to give this all-encompassing document short shrift. Refer to it frequently throughout the course. The *ICONS User Manual* (Wilkenfeld and Brecht 1988), given to participants during

the workshop, has a good glossary of key terms in international relations. This may help many students to better comprehend the scenario.

Class Position Paper

The crowning event of Phase One is the formulation of a class position paper. This document should include: background material on national goals and policies of the specified country, problems facing that nation, evaluation of alternative policies, and recommendations. Putting together a good position paper is difficult for several reasons. One problem stems from time pressure. Position papers must be mailed or sent electronically to the University of Maryland at the start of the simulation.[11] In practice this means that a class must do this assignment in about six weeks. This is no small undertaking - especially when one considers that many students may know virtually nothing about their assigned country when the class commences. To see that the task is finished promptly, the wise professor will impose a series of strict deadlines (e.g. for various drafts of a bibliography or portions of the group paper).

Another predicament besetting students is the problem of obtaining country-specific material. It is relatively easy to gather generic information on scenario issues. It is much more difficult to obtain accurate, current information on what the decision-makers in "Country X" are likely to say with respect to those issues. The *ICONS User Manual* contains a worthy list of foreign policy resources. Students should be encouraged to contact relevant embassies, UN delegations, IGOs, and NGOs. Of course, the quality of responses to these enquiries will vary drastically on a case by case basis. Emphasis should be placed on getting students to realize that there is no time to waste. They must try to contact these foreign policy resources right away. Similarly, students can only dawdle at their own risk in obtaining government documents and material through inter-library loan. The value of accenting these points in a good bibliographic instruction session early in the semester is obvious.

A third difficulty in producing an excellent position paper involves group dynamics and logistics. The position paper is a wide-ranging work. It makes sense to break the class up into groups which concentrate on writing a section of the whole. With some success, I have in the past asked my students to rank order their interest in about a half dozen topics covered in the scenario. I assign them to position paper working groups based on their choices. I have found, while not every student can be placed into his/her first choice area, a surprisingly large number of students are satisfied with their assignments, since most get one of their top selections. This system helps in building interest and morale during the important initial weeks of ICONS.

To provide for accountability, I strongly recommend that each group elect a leader. All of the group leaders together may form a class council which is small enough to meet with the professor on a regular basis. This arrangement allows several students to assume real leadership responsibilities as they simultaneously serve as conduits of information between the professor and groups.

Inherent in any such collective exercise is the potential for poor chemistry among group members. This, however, is a good learning experience because it approximates "real life." Once in a while the professor has to intervene; but, usually most groups can solve their own problems. The fact that group leaders are chosen by the students tends to give them a certain amount of legitimacy. Nevertheless, some may quickly squander this resource if they are too dictatorial vis a vis their peers. In spite of the possibility for some friction, I believe the positive aspects of considerable group activity outweigh the negative. Indeed, a strong argument can be made that many political science departments would be well advised to consider incorporating more collective activities into their curricula.

Class Leadership

The matter of top class leadership is a ticklish situation. If it is not handled properly, much frustration may result. The professor and students are certainly free to experiment with different models. Every class seems to have its unique circumstances. In theory democracy works best; however, I have experienced a situation in which elected class leaders had an enormous amount of trouble getting anything accomplished.

An alternative model is to appoint perhaps three students with strong writing skills to pull together the work of the various groups and fashion a coherent position paper. If the chosen student editors/leaders do a good job, the rest of the class will most likely wish to retain them in their leadership roles as the term progresses. If they do inadequate work, they can be replaced later. In any case, it is absolutely imperative that the class be well organized from the outset. Each student must clearly understand his/her responsibilities and the necessity of meeting deadlines. The instructor must be sure that he/she has ample time to review the class position paper before it is sent to the University of Maryland. Those students responsible for editing the position paper on time will no doubt have done a great deal of work and should be suitably rewarded in their final grade.

A word of caution is in order. ICONS demands delegation of authority from the professor to the students. Not all may be prepared for this. Student leaders, for example, are prone to complain that rank and file class members are uncooperative when it comes to attending group meetings, observing their imposed deadlines, following class procedures and formats, etc. The

instructor must use common sense to determine whether and how to intercede. Too much intervention should be avoided.

Word Processing

ICONS is a splendid opportunity for "writing across the curriculum." Students in ICONS use word processing software to prepare messages off-line before signing on to POLNET II. Most readily available packages work very well. Many enthusiastic students, however, want to participate as quickly as possible and are willing to write almost anything in the process. The prudent professor will encourage his/her class to take the necessary time to use the word processor to edit messages for greater clarity. After all, international *communication* is what ICONS is largely about. For most country-teams originating in the United States this means messages should be written in clear and concise English. This is doubly true when they are going to be translated. Political science students must grow to realize the impropriety of giving translators messages replete with errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar. They should also learn not to procrastinate because they must afford the translating team reasonable time to do their essential work.

At my institution during the last several years, approximately seventy percent of freshman political science majors have indicated they have had prior experience using a word processor. Furthermore, virtually all of the majors in the college are required to take Introduction to Computer Systems in which they are exposed to *Q & A*, *WordPerfect* and a mainframe word processor. Nonetheless, too many students are really not comfortable with functions such as spell-check and merging files. Perhaps this is because they are exposed to so many concepts in the computer course. In any event, placing near the ICONS PC copies of guides containing instructions for the most vital word processing tasks is advised. *Q & A*, unlike *WordPerfect*, has the advantage of being almost intuitively comprehensible and is very suitable for shorter documents; however, it is very slow for the long position paper which *WordPerfect* handles with ease. One solution is for the groups to work on their position paper in segments using *Q & A* which can be later exported into *WordPerfect* files for use by the editors. Certainly, the class could be required to employ the more difficult *WordPerfect*. Another solution is to use the mainframe's word processor. However, many students and professors find this to be user-unfriendly. Both other alternatives require more teaching time.

Theoretical Concerns

Phase One would not be complete without attention to theoretical matters. In particular, emphasis in class should be placed on attempting to answer the question: "What is the best way for people

in a multicultural world to handle their differences?". Fortunately, some excellent books are available to aid the instructor in this task. *Getting to Yes: Negotiating Agreement Without Giving In* by Roger Fisher et al (Fisher 1991) is a marvelous resource. Another interesting book is Raymond Cohen's *Negotiating Across Cultures* (Cohen 1991).

In addition to considering effective ways of international communication and negotiation, students in Phase One should brush up, if necessary, on the fundamentals of testing hypotheses and answering research questions. The ICONS manual quite properly recommends that a portion of students' grades be based on essay exams which encourage delving into the theoretical underpinnings of issues confronted in the negotiation process. In my classes I have arranged a take-home final in which I require that students immerse themselves in the data archives of the simulation in order to test a hypothesis or answer a research question. Hence, I find it wise to motivate students to think in these terms from the beginning. Students frequently need a fair amount of help in this area and one of the most important functions of the professor in an ICONS course is to assist students in grappling with these matters.

Trouble Shooting

During my first exposure to the ICONS program, my institution provided me with an IBM XT and printer, as well as an external 1200 baud modem. The XT was loaded with *Q & A* for word processing and *PROCOMM+* for telecommunications. My school was not yet a part of the Internet so we had to pay more for access to a commercial network. The system worked well.

The next semester Marist enjoyed Internet privileges and could, therefore, take advantage of the attendant cheaper fees. The XT was fitted with an emulation card which enabled it to have direct access to our campus mainframe[12], an IBM 3090-200E, which in turn could connect via the Internet to the University of Maryland's VAX. This hook-up also performed well with one exception. Due to incompatibility at the time (POLNET II has subsequently been amended for enhanced compatibility) between the file transfer software on the two mainframes, we could not successfully upload long "canned" messages that had been created off-line. The problem was eventually rectified. The solution consisted of dialing directly into our own mainframe using *PROCOMM+*. This gave us the best of both worlds. On the one hand, through our mainframe we could issue the appropriate Telnet command to connect us to College Park. On the other hand, we could also successfully use the upload facility of *PROCOMM+*.

Marist's Director of Academic Computing was instrumental in remedying the situation. The ICONS staff is very willing to work with your school's support personnel to solve this type of problem.[13] Again, the key is log on and test your system as early

as possible.

Hardware, Software and Computer Skills

As can readily be seen from previous comments, Phase One, if done properly, is an extremely busy time. However, there is one other major area that needs to be covered before the class is ready for Phase Two. It is absolutely critical that every single student learns how to employ the computer and peripherals to access and master POLNET II. If this is not the case, there will be a distinct tendency for students who are ignorant or shy of the system to defer to those who are more competent. Thus, the instructor must carefully observe, and if necessary test, all students during Phase One to insure their familiarity in manipulating POLNET II.

Although the system is quite user-friendly and is regularly operated by high school pupils, it can cause problems for university students who have not taken proper time to study the provided instructions. For instance, in a recent simulation one of my students underwent unnecessary misery because she did not understand differences between commands for regular mail and on-line conferencing. Both were clearly explained in handouts.

An ICONS team must have a PC (almost any kind), printer, 1200 or 2400 baud modem, and phone line, as well as word processing and telecommunications software.[14] Internet (NSFnet) or Sprintnet (a commercial communications service previously called Telenet) are the main options for connecting your computer to POLNET II. The principle advantage of the former is that, unlike the latter, there is no cost to the end user of communication (Crookall and Landis, 107).

Because machines will break from time to time and systems will crash, it is highly advisable to make advance contingency plans with computer center personnel. Having to wait too long for any necessary repairs risks damaging class spirit.

Whatever configuration of hardware and software is utilized, the instructor will want to safeguard its security. Having a separate ICONS room with a system for protecting its contents (e.g. proximity to security guards or controlled keys) is ideal. A room holding approximately fifteen people works very nicely and serves as a good place for political science and foreign language students to intermingle and learn from one another. Of course, not every professor will be afforded this luxury. A smaller dedicated ICONS room holding six individuals is far better than no room at all.[15]

A special ICONS room can be decorated with maps, pictures, posters and a flag of the assigned country. A clock set to Greenwich Mean Time, the standard for the simulation, is strongly suggested. Also highly recommended is a data show projector so

that the output on the computer CRT can be cast on a wall or large screen. This device is extraordinarily helpful. It allows the professor to monitor proceedings much more thoroughly without getting in the way and it fosters a much greater level of class participation, especially when used in a big room with many observers.

Though not absolutely necessary, an additional telephone with long distance capabilities in close proximity to the PC can be valuable - particularly if there is a mishap during an on-line conference.[16]

Whatever combination of hardware and software is chosen, the instructor must be thoroughly familiar with it so he/she can explain it to the class. If the professor is a novice in this area, or if the system employed is complicated, it may be wise to invite the director of academic computing or some similar official with technical expertise to teach a block of instruction on hardware/software. It is essential to have printed instructions which detail every single step that a student needs to access and negotiate POLNET II. In this regard the second chapter of the *ICONS User Manual* contains eleven pages of generic information that every participant must know. These pages should be reproduced for careful student scrutiny. The professor should supplement them with additional information relating to his/her own institution's hardware, software and telecommunications. One must be absolutely confident that any handouts are 100% accurate. Copies should be posted near the PC. The importance of thorough documentation can not be stressed enough.

The primary thing is for every student to be comfortable with the computer and telecommunications hardware and software *before* the onset of Phase Two. Since Phase One is so intensive (class organization, pre-simulation questionnaire, bibliographic instruction, country-specific study, scenario review, theoretical concerns, position paper, linkage with translators), this is no easy accomplishment -- particularly if the class is large or contains any computer-phobic students.

The close of Phase One may very well coincide with midterms. The instructor will want to be sure that expectations for any midterm examination are realistic given the aforementioned demands placed on students.

Phase Two

The second phase of ICONS - the guts of the simulation - lasts about one month. Students communicate with their peers around the country and the world in two ways: the "regular mail" and real-time conferencing. The latter is more exciting and seductive to the students, but the former is just as important.

Regular Mail

In the regular mail mode students send messages to the University of Maryland mainframe for storage and eventual retrieval by other applicable country-teams whenever they wish. Regular mail should be used as a vehicle to set a firm foundation and even keel for the ofttimes frenetic on-line conferences. Effective and efficient class procedures need to be established and strictly followed to make sure *at all times* that someone is responsible for retrieving and sorting incoming messages.[17] Communications received in another language must be transmitted without delay to a translator.

Typically, each Phase Two starts out slowly. In some cases this is because students have still not mastered necessary hardware and software for using POLNET II. In other cases students are simply not quite sure what to do to prepare for the on-line conferences. One strategy that is effective to some degree in getting the ball rolling is to encourage your students to think of other country teams that share goals similar to your own. Send friendly messages to these teams and try to forge regional or issue-specific alliances with them. A country-team's pro-active posture during the initial stages of Phase Two is important - especially if your school is role-playing the delegation of a relatively minor country. If these delegations do not use initiative from the beginning, they easily can be ignored by other players later on.

In this the simulation faithfully depicts real life whereby tiny nations' views are often overlooked. Encouraging even students representing major country-teams to be active and creative early on is advantageous. It helps to create enthusiasm and esprit de corps that may last throughout the semester.

Monitoring the output of student messages sent in the regular mail is one of the most important functions of the instructor, who by this point has developed into more of a facilitator. I strongly counsel, if at all feasible, for the facilitator to have a PC and modem at home to make it easier to perform this supervisory function. Your team may send scores of messages in the regular mail on perhaps a half-dozen topic areas to more than twenty other institutions. The POLNET II system allows the professor or student to run a directory of the complicated message flow. Directories can list the sender(s) of messages transmitted to your team, recipients(s) of communications sent by your team, message numbers, as well as the GMT of origin and subject matter of each message. Hence, the professor can quickly learn that his/her class group on human rights has not sent out any communications in the last several days. If the facilitator has E-mail capability with class members (which is highly desirable), a warning message can be sent immediately encouraging greater-levels of participation.

The facilitator can retrieve, not only a listing of the various messages sent or received by his/her country-team, but also the complete text of any such message. Therefore, the professor can monitor qualitative as well as quantitative concerns. Facilitators may not have the time to read every message; but, they will be able to select many for perusal. Students are more apt to take their work seriously when they appreciate that this quality control mechanism is operating well.

On-Line Conferences

SIMCON (Simulation Control at the University of Maryland) will electronically distribute a conference schedule prior to the beginning of Phase Two. This listing should also be posted near the ICONS PC. A typical simulation might have eight on-line conferences, each consisting of two rounds. It is probable and proper that your institution will not be invited to participate in every conference. The instructor should reorganize the class, if necessary, to insure that a group of students is concentrating throughout Phase Two on each conference area in which your school is expected to participate. Just as it was best to have one student responsible for leading each of the class groups working on the position paper, every preparation group for an on-line conference should also have its leader.

The schedule for on-line conferences is always published in Greenwich Mean Time and everyone involved in ICONS needs to be familiar with GMT. The facilitator has to insure that a suitable class contingent is on hand for every on-line conference to which his/her country-team is invited. This can sometimes be a bit of a problem. The conferences are scheduled at various times throughout the simulation period. Occasionally, they are set rather late at night or at times when some students may be at work or taking other classes.[18] Of course, an on-line conference may be scheduled in the middle of one of a professor's other responsibilities as well.

Although this is a considerable extra burden[19], whenever possible the facilitator should attend an on-line conference. This is particularly true for the first rounds in which students may be somewhat nervous since they don't know exactly what to expect. Requesting one or two students responsible for the second conference to witness the first (and so on) is good practice. In fact, in my opinion, the more students who watch conference proceedings, the better. The major limitation is spatial and this can be overcome with a larger room and data show projector. When the news about ICONS is revealed to the campus community via word of mouth or student newspaper, others (especially faculty) may wish to watch a portion of a conference. For example, recently one of my colleagues in religious studies became enamored with an on-line conference dealing with human rights. The intriguing nature of ICONS, which invokes interest across academic disciplines, is one

of the most appealing aspects of the entire program.

Before every conference someone must be responsible for assuring that all hardware/software is working properly. It is smart to log on early enough to allow time to fix any gremlins. Special attention should be given to the printer to make sure that it is operating well and has plenty of paper. It will use a great deal during a normal conference and it is necessary to keep a "paper trail" of the events that transpire. Relatively simple problems, like having computer paper come off track, can cause undue anxiety. Learn how to fix such things yourself. Ask someone who can make simple repairs to attend every round you are forced to miss.

SIMCON publishes a detailed agenda of each on-line conference several days ahead of time. The facilitator must check to see that it has been translated if necessary, read, and understood by those students that will participate in the conference. The latter should hold brainstorming sessions in which they come to agreement on how their delegation will deal with the various agenda items. They should divulge their strategies to the instructor prior to every conference.

Each group should also share its ideas with the rest of the class. This serves as an important check against inconsistency in positions taken by various groups. A strong class position paper should always be the first point of reference.[20] The facilitator must constantly remind students to document, to the extent possible, that the positions and tactics they are going to assume in negotiations are realistic. Many students believe that once Phase One is completed, their research has halted for the semester. A considerable amount of the instructor's energy in Phase Two is invested in convincing the class otherwise. A good ICONS team, of course, does research throughout the course. Thoughtful final exams hammer this point home.

Since the pace of the on-line conferences is usually very rapid, it is vital that attending students have previously agreed to, and actually abide by, a set of decision-rules. A half dozen students may be sitting by the PC. Three may want to vote "yes" and three "no" or the first roll call vote summoned by SIMCON. The class must anticipate in advance and prepare for this possibility. What is important is not so much the particular shape of class decision-rules, but rather the fact they exist.

I recommend having a good typist who is thoroughly familiar with POLNET II to be at the keyboard at each conference. Nevertheless, the facilitator must be ever vigilant to make sure this individual is not abusing his/her position of power.[21]

As a general rule, students tend to find the first round of an on-line conference to be a satisfying experience. This is particularly true if they were skillful enough to shepherd one of

their own resolutions through to passage by the majority of other country-teams. On the other hand, students may get a bit testy if their resolutions don't pass or if there is a hardware or software malfunction. Fortunately, careful planning makes technical mishaps a relatively rare occurrence; but, as in the real world, there is simply no guarantee your delegation will win the day. Students should be warned in advance that ICONS is similar in many respects to live TV. Anything can happen. This is part of what makes it so exciting.

SIMCON often publishes reviews of the first round of each conference. Students should study these as they prepare for the next engagement.

Often students become so involved in preparations for these rounds that they fail to appreciate sufficiently what their peers are doing. A group working on world health, for instance, may not understand what the world trade group is doing. Again, it is up to the facilitator to make sufficient class time available so that groups share and learn from one another. Students completing a round should explain to others what major issues were on the agenda and how they were handled. They should recount any surprises that transpired and what occurred that was good or bad from their perspective.

Phase Three

The final phase of an ICONS course is in many ways the most important from a teacher's point of view. During this time students and professor can collectively catch their breath and reflect about what was learned in the preceding weeks.

Debriefing

Phase Three is first and foremost an opportunity for debriefing. All participants should attempt to answer a series of questions:

> Did the simulation appear to accurately reflect the real world? Did your country-team consistently act in an authentic manner? What about the other delegations? Did they play in character? Did your delegation achieve most of its goals? If so, why? If not, why not? Which negotiating strategies demonstrated themselves to be most rewarding? If given a second chance, what should be done differently? What did the class learn from the reading materials that was borne out by the simulation?

Post-simulation Questionnaire/Course Evaluation

The major difficulty with Phase Three from the facilitator's vantage point may very well be the lack of time. During a fall semester, the termination of Phase Two will coincide approximately

with Thanksgiving. Students returning from the vacation may have less than two full weeks before final exams. Some waning class time must be devoted to having students fill out post-simulation questionnaires (which are very similar to, although a bit longer than, pre-simulation instruments). It is a mistake to rush students to complete these since haphazard information is of little value. With the rush of end-of-semester tasks, those who complete the questionnaires at home are prone to do a poor job.

Because a course utilizing ICONS is inherently different, students should be given ample occasion to appraise it, the facilitator, and their peers. Standard institutional evaluation forms are desirable. Moreover, students tend to be quite candid when asked orally to give their opinions about the strengths and weaknesses of the program.

Final Examination

As noted above, I require my students, in the form of a take-home final exam, to use the simulation archives to test a hypothesis or answer a research question. Students are forced to document points made in their essays with references to specific message numbers.

Once Phase Two is finished, simulation messages are open for everyone's inspection. This includes communications that were previously off limits. During the second stage if your country-team were role-playing Mexico, it would not be able to view private regular mail messages between Russia and Nigeria. In Phase Three, however, even this type of message may be retrieved. Study of this formerly concealed data may yield interesting results.

If students have still not mastered POLNET II or have not given serious sustained thought to the topic of their final exam, they will have substantial difficulty with this assignment.

Grading

An ICONS course requires special attention when it comes to evaluating students. The group position paper, the focal point of Phase One, needs to be weighed heavily enough so that class participants take it seriously. Through trial and error, I have developed a procedure whereby I will read each portion of the paper separately, as well as together, and assign a common grade to all students who took part in fashioning that section. Students usually accept this system. However, as with any group project, there is always the possibility of having an individual slough off his/her work responsibilities on other students.

The ICONS team at the University of Maryland strongly suggests that the instructor consider student peer evaluations as part of the final grade. This is good advice. I ask my students to

evaluate only those students whose work they watched carefully throughout the course. In practice, this means that each student will rate only those few others who have worked on a shared portion of the position paper or on a common topic for a real-time conference. Class leaders or position-paper editors will be graded by more students. Leaders and editors uniformly tend to get from their peers high marks which, in my judgment, are almost always well deserved. Although some students may inflate grades, on the whole most students take these grading responsibilities seriously. For most, the experience of this kind of power is new and intriguing. One of my colleagues, a psychologist, suggested to me that when students have some say in marking each other it is intelligent to have them write in a few sentences *why* they are giving another individual a certain grade. This too is splendid advice. Professors using this device will learn an enormous amount about what really transpired during the semester.

An antidote for possible grade inflation is having several bases for grades other than mere peer evaluation. An ICONS course may easily include grades for: a mid-term on assigned readings, group position paper, map test, class participation, assorted quizzes, and a take-home final. With so many possible inputs that may be weighed differently, the instructor will want to use some kind of spreadsheet application. Brownstone Research Group's *Diploma II* is extremely user-friendly and works efficiently. Students are apt to appreciate a computer's accuracy in grade generation *provided* that evaluative criteria are clearly outlined in the syllabus and explained forthrightly in class.

Building on the ICONS Experience[22]

One exciting way to enhance an ICONS course is through the use of electronic conferencing *within* your own institution. For example, the Marist mainframe (like those of hundreds of schools in the U.S.A. and around the world) functions under the MUSIC (Multi-User System for Interactive Computing) operating system developed at McGill University. Institutions employing MUSIC may lease from IBM a facility called SUPER. This set of utilities is designed to allow the professor to communicate on-line with the students (and vice versa) and to post information (syllabi, assignments, etc.) for perusal at any time.

In the context of ICONS, this facility, or one like it, allows the professor to solve certain problems. For example, the facilitator who breaks his/her class down into working groups is sometimes confronted with the dilemma of having one student complain that he/she is doing all of the work. If the instructor has been able to set up a mini academic conference or a set of small electronic discussion groups, it is easier to see if the complaint is justified.

Another difficulty can arise when a working group is composed of industrious students whose schedules do not mesh. Adult students frequently cannot meet with others from the class at the nocturnal hours prized by many traditional students. E-mail and electronic conferencing can remedy the situation. Finally, these tools can also enable the professor to keep in contact with the students in the interim between classes, or, given the increasing number of students who have PC at home, even during vacation periods.

Conclusion and Major Recommendations

This paper has offered detailed suggestions to political scientists desiring to implement a course utilizing ICONS. Empirical data collected from pre and post-simulation surveys confirm the valuable nature of this program.[23] In short, ICONS works. It does so, in large part, because the simulation is based on principles of experiential learning. Students are motivated to become fully involved and take responsibility for their own education. Nevertheless, ICONS is not necessarily easy to put into practice. It mandates careful thought and dedication. I am confident that the labor will be worth the effort. In closing, I offer the following summary of principal recommendations:

1. Be prepared to work hard and invest time.

2. Commit fully to the program[24] - including the foreign language aspects.

3. Garner at an early stage the support of key people at your college or university.

4. Advertise honestly the character of the course.

5. Test *all* aspects of hardware, software, and telecommunications *as soon as possible*.

6. Document carefully and publish *all* required operations.

7. Monitor with precision student practice sessions on the equipment.

8. Test student knowledge of the scenario, POLNET II, assigned country, and archival data.

9. Reserve abundant time for class discussion.

10. Anticipate complicated class dynamics.

11. Develop a flexible attitude that fosters learning by trial and error as well as through the experience of others.

12. Have fun!

The last suggestion is not frivolous. Students are all too quick to notice the harried professor. Instructors can not fairly expect students to be eager about courses when they do not appear to be enthusiastic themselves. Fortunately, if done with care, ICONS affords *both* student and teacher the possibility of *enjoying* their battle against inexcusable ignorance.

Notes

1. Those interested in more information about ICONS should contact Dr. Jonathan Wilkenfeld (Executive Director) or Ms. Patty Landis (Simulation Director), Department of Government & Politics, 2148 Lefrak Hall, University of Maryland, College Park, MD 20742; phone: (301) 405-4172; FAX: (301) 314-9690; E-mail: PLANDIS@BSS2.UMD.EDU. ICONS has two general university-level simulations each year; nevertheless, it also offers other kinds of programs for both college and high school students. Comments in this paper are geared especially for professors contemplating the general university simulation, but may be helpful to facilitators of the other versions.

2. The author wishes to thank the following for their support of Marist's ICONS program: Dennis Murray, Mark Sullivan, Marc vanderHeyden, Carl Gerberich, Richard Atkins, Vincent Toscano, Louis Zuccarello, Paul Adogamhe, Maurice Bibeau, John McGinty, and Barbara Brenner. Special commendation is extended to Mary Beth Commisso, Charyl Pollard, Irma Blanco Casey, and Joseph Belanger. As can readily be appreciated from such a long list, an ICONS instructor may very likely come to rely upon, in one fashion or another, the assistance of many of his/her colleagues. Thoughts drawn from interviews with many of the aforementioned people have been woven into this essay.

3. For the Fall 1993 University Simulation the bill is $500 for schools with an Internet connection and $800 for institutions using Sprintnet. At least one college has employed the practice of charging students lab fees to cover costs. Approximately seventy percent of university-level participants are hard wired to Internet.

4. A smaller number will be overwhelmed with work. A larger number may sometimes feel they do not have enough to do.

Professors teaching large lecture classes (e.g. 50 students) are well advised to separate participants into two or three country-teams.

5. Telephone interview with Ms. Patty Landis, ICONS Simulation Director, July 12, 1993 in College Park, MD.

6. Project ICONS is in the process of installing and testing an on-line questionnaire authoring system which will quickly compile these survey results. This will be an enormous benefit. Busy professors frequently do not have the time to make their own compilations.

7. Political scientists should urge their friends in foreign language departments to look into the merits of ICONS. American college students are studying foreign languages less despite the increasingly global economy. Phyllis Franklin, Executive Director

of the Modern Language Association, reports that in 1960, 16 out of every 100 college enrollees were taking a foreign language. By 1990, the rate had dropped to 8.5 per 100 (*New York Times* [Education], February 10, 1993) ! Implementing an ICONS program as a foreign language professor is a subject worthy of another paper.

According to Simulation Director Patty Landis, twenty-seven country-teams were involved in the Spring 1993 University Simulation. Of these, seven elected to receive, but not send, messages in a foreign language. Three did both.

Project ICONS has begun to mandate that colleges at least use electronically a provided third-party translator. This change is very important. Not only does it make the simulation much more realistic, it prevents discouragement which can build up in country-teams that choose to commit to the foreign language component. This occurs when the latter, unlike other teams, have to wait a twenty-four hour turnaround period for translations, and, thereby, feel to be at a distinct disadvantage.

8. Whenever feasible, political scientists should obtain translations of research material published in the native language of their country-team. Students portraying the French delegation would not, for instance, want to get all of their citations from *The Economist*.

9. Telephone interview with Ms. Patty Landis, July 12, 1993.

10. The ICONS manual (3-14) explains the idea is "to prevent students from taking their moves out of the daily newspaper while at the same time not allowing them to stray too far from the reality of their country-team's past and present foreign policies."

11. SIMCON is now making a renewed commitment to provide participants with feedback on their papers.

12. Using the mainframe has distinct advantages. It frees our dedicated PC for the class editors and translators, and prevents "traffic jams" in the ICONS room. Usually campus "dumb" terminals are available for everyone. This means that, for all practical purposes, *any* of my students can access POLNET II on demand. This capability is a real boon during the busy final exam period.

13. During the fall 1992 simulation, Marist suffered a major hardware problem that prevented our use of the Internet. The ICONS team did an excellent job in finding emergency alternatives. As a result, my students were able to participate fully in all conferences.

14. According to Landis, POLNET II was designed to operate with IBM and Apple type computers. The price paid for this generic quality is that the system can not tolerate accent marks, Cyrillic and Asian characters, etc.

Overseas teams usually find the system works very well.

Occasionally, some teams in Europe have had to be patient with slow transmission rates apparently resulting from an aging Internet connector in Germany.

15. Enthusiastic students may get rather noisy during a teleconference - especially when they disagree! Hence, it is preferable not to place the ICONS PC in a room where others may be disturbed.

16. The Marist team could not log on properly during an initial conference of last autumn's simulation. It was necessary to make a hurried phone call to SIMCON for instructions. This situation was eventually fixed. Nevertheless, in such circumstances you do not want to waste time looking around for a phone or the round will be over.

17. Country-teams are also required to issue at least two "communiques" per week. These are statements of official positions on any of the whole host of issues confronting delegations and they may be generated for publicity purposes. Although it would appear to be easy for a class to fulfill this biweekly requirement, in practice, given the rush of events in Phase Two, communiques may slip through the cracks unless the instructor is on guard.

18. Participants in ICONS literally span the globe. Therefore, by necessity, some parties must be inconvenienced some of the time.

19. A typical country-team might be invited to partake in a dozen hours of on-line negotiations. My colleague, Dr. Paul Adogamhe, has attended a midnight round! Overseas teams (e.g. in Finland) frequently participate late at night.

20. Major problems will develop if participants start to act unrealistically. After a past simulation, for example, the school portraying Syria argued persuasively that institutions role-playing other Arab states were out of character in being too friendly to Israel. Close scrutiny by SIMCON and facilitators can prevent such situations from arising or escalating.

Students are prone to act in a non-authentic fashion (e.g. by solving all tensions in the Middle East in one month!) in order "to win the game." In actuality, ICONS is *not* a match to be won or lost. Thus, as the ICONS manual (3-14) suggests: "... one should not expect dramatic developments on all fronts during the course of the simulation."

21. One technique is to mandate that another individual be the leader of the conference who has final decision-making authority.

22. Spatial limitations prevent my elaborating on how ICONS courses can be readily enhanced. Without doubt, many ideas currently being pursued by members of APSA's Computers and

Multimedia Section mesh well with ICONS: the use of interactive video, E-mail, LISTSERV discussion groups, "paperless" classrooms, satellite T.V., etc.

Serious consideration should also be given to offering ICONS as an upper-level cluster. In this arrangement political science students would work hand in hand with their counterparts who have backgrounds in history, international business, liberation theology, economics, environmental science and so forth.

A grandiose, but stimulating, plan would offer the ICONS program in conjunction with a short trip abroad.

Finally, the possibilities of enhancing the learning process of physically challenged persons through the program should be explored.

23. According to a University of Maryland study, more than 85% of the students surveyed felt they learned more in the ICONS class than they learned from straight lecture classes. Ninety-five percent maintained they learned about the complexity of decision-making in international relations (Wilkenfeld and Brecht 1988, 6-3).

Marist students were asked last fall: "Did your experience in the simulation cause you to change the way you think or feel about any international issues?". Here are a few typical responses: 1. "Yes it did because I saw many different points of view from a variety of countries." 2. "I became more aware of the international level and found out about the amount of work needed to get nations to concur on issues and proposals." 3. "Yes. I am much more sympathetic towards citizens of other countries that are denied their basic human rights."

24. ICONS exacts the need for cooperation among *all* participating institutions and the University of Maryland. If one player does a poor job, it has adverse consequences for everybody. Facilitators and SIMCON must work conscientiously in partnership to maintain high academic standards.

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